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President: Mr. Schulz (Vice-President) ..... (Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance *(continued)*

Panel discussion: "Addressing humanitarian challenges linked to disaster and climate change induced mobility"

1. **The President**, introducing the panel, said that the discussion would explore how States Members could better understand the risks and vulnerabilities connected to disasters and climate change and take a forward-looking, anticipatory approach to preparedness and humanitarian assistance. There would also be a reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for those displaced by natural disasters or the effects of climate change. The panel would address some of the key short- and long-term humanitarian challenges raised by displacement, particularly in protracted situations or when disasters were recurrent. In addition, it would discuss how to reduce the risk of being displaced by natural disasters and climate change, given the likelihood that they would become more prevalent and more acute. Risk reduction was particularly relevant because the effects of climate change were increasingly combined with such factors as extreme poverty, economic and food crises, water scarcity, population growth and urbanization. Cross-border movements added a further layer of complexity to the challenge of responding to the protection and assistance needs of affected persons, a challenge from which the international community should not shy away.

2. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that one of the goals of the discussion was to look strategically at protection and assistance responsibilities in the light of the fact that, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, an average of 25.3 million people were displaced by disasters each year. Moreover, climate change, in combination with other factors, was expected to increase displacement both within and across borders in the future. A number of tools, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Blueprint for Action on El Niño, had been adopted to help States reduce risks related to climate change and disasters, with the aim of strengthening the resilience of affected persons and host communities. One of the central principles of climate change adaptation was to prioritize the particular needs of vulnerable groups as, when disaster forced individuals from their homes, pre-existing patterns of discrimination were often exacerbated, hindering the access of marginalized and vulnerable groups to humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, it was those same groups who found themselves at heightened risk of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence.

3. While the vast majority of persons displaced by disaster remained within their own country, cross-border displacement was also common and was expected to become more frequent. The Platform on Disaster Displacement continued the important work begun under the Nansen Initiative on disaster-induced cross-border displacement and was an important vehicle for States, international organizations and other actors in enhancing cooperation and coordination and ensuring a comprehensive approach to the issue. Not all disaster-induced displacement was internal, nor was it only short-term in nature. On the contrary, in many cases, people did not find solutions for years after the event and became increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance and unable to move forward with their lives. Additionally, large-scale disasters and ensuing displacement could undermine government efforts to achieve development objectives and often overstretched the capacity and finances of both national and local authorities. It was therefore essential that humanitarian and development actors, financial institutions and the private sector should work together to complement the efforts of the authorities to protect and support those displaced and host communities. A key recommendation of a recent study by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was that governments as well as humanitarian and development actors should focus on clear and measurable collective outcomes that reduced the vulnerability of internally displaced persons and host communities over time, thereby enabling millions to secure better access to livelihoods, adequate housing with security of tenure and basic services.

8. **Mr. Su** (Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), panellist, said that the Federation had 17 million volunteers living and working in communities in over 190 countries and who, therefore, experienced shocks and hazards first-hand. The question was whether shocks and hazards, especially recurring ones like monsoons, forest fires and hurricanes, automatically had to turn into disasters. Year on year, the Federation reported increased coverage, but perhaps the number of persons served was not the best indicator of success. The real issue was what efforts were being made to ensure that the next time, fewer people were affected, the needs were reduced and the response did not have to be as major. The answer lay in resilience, which could be increased through capacity-building and preparedness.

9. One way in which the international community could help to boost resilience was by investing on a much larger scale ahead of a crisis. The issuance of advance payments based on weather forecasts had recently been introduced in Bangladesh as the country braced for Tropical Cyclone Mora. 3,000 households had received the equivalent of 60 euros the day before the cyclone hit to cover immediate needs, rather than having to wait for humanitarian assistance after the fact. One of the key outcomes was a sense of dignity and empowerment among the at-risk communities stemming from the ability to take action for themselves. Secondly, the international community had to recognize that reducing climate-induced displacement was a matter of fostering resilience so that individuals no longer had to leave their homes and livelihoods in search of a safer place. Although some work was being done to that end, more was needed to make responses more flexible, needs-based and focused on other issues in addition to migration. For example, the national Red Cross societies in Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda worked with meteorological and hydrological departments to deliver advance weather information to communities and to train them in preparing for extreme weather events. Thirdly, it was necessary to empower local organizations to manage climate shocks and disaster responses, because local solutions were the most effective, yet investment in local capacity was far outstripped by investment in other aspects of disaster relief. It was also recognized that crises were not the optimal time in which to build partnerships and trust.

6. **Mr. Khan** (Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office at Geneva, panellist, said that climate change was the most important issue currently facing Fiji and neighbouring Pacific island countries. If not managed wisely and in a timely manner, it would represent the greatest barrier to the country's sustainable development, given that much of the economy rested on natural resources. The Cabinet had adopted a climate change framework in 2007, providing for a multidisciplinary, whole-of-government approach and the promotion of partnerships with the private sector and civil society.

7. That approach was particularly appropriate in the area of disaster and climate change-induced displacement. While the number of persons displaced by sudden onset events was well documented, there was far less certainty about the number displaced as a consequence of the slow onset of climate change, such as rising sea levels, salinization and ocean acidification. There were communities, particularly in the Pacific, that had already been forced to move from coastal areas to higher ground, but it was not known whether there was a causal connection between those phenomena and displacement or whether displacement was attributable to a combination of factors. In Fiji, the principles of equity, participation and multidisciplinary action, which were already embedded in the Policy, had been translated into a relocation policy. The underlying idea was that relocation decisions must be made in consultation with the communities concerned and that consultation processes should take account of barriers to consultation for certain groups like women and children. Consultation was particularly important because indigenous communities had a spiritual link with the land, sea and minerals, and so relocation had a very deep emotional impact on the people concerned. Because 92 per cent of the land was held in trust for indigenous peoples, it was crucial to have guidelines on relocation, establishing that relocation was a last resort, ensuring the participation of the persons concerned and addressing the barriers that might prevent some stakeholders from being consulted. Authorities would have to change the way they communicated with indigenous communities; failure to do so would mean that efforts were unlikely to be effective.

8. Climate change also raised the issue of cross-border displacement, a very real prospect for Pacific island countries built on coral atolls and a significant concern because there was no legal framework in place to deal with the issue. Human Rights Council resolution 35/20 on human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/35/20) was timely, but the Pacific island countries would have to work very closely with United Nations agencies, humanitarian actors and other partners to determine where the populations of low-lying countries would go, what their rights were in the context of relocation and what obligations were incumbent upon receiving States, especially with regard to cultural autonomy. Tropical Cyclone Winston had been an excellent lesson on appropriate coordination and the need to build resilience. In addition, the international community had done a wonderful job rallying around Fiji, providing assistance either directly or through the national Red Cross society. It had been key for Fiji to have a measure of control over the way humanitarian assistance was rolled out because, as previous crises had shown, the assistance being offered might be plentiful and well-intentioned, but it was often not tailored to needs on the ground. During the Winston crisis, cluster groups composed of government agencies, civil society organizations and IFRC had been set up in every area with an evacuation centre to coordinate humanitarian assistance. As a consequence, relief efforts had been better organized, far more focused and more participatory. The challenge now was to rebuild for the longer-term rather than simply in view of the next crisis.

9. **Ms. Thompson** (Deputy Director, International Organization for Migration), panellist, said that her organization worked to help build capacity and provide support to governments, communities and individuals with a view to preventing sudden or slow-onset natural disasters from becoming major humanitarian crises. Factors such as class, gender, age and ethnic, cultural and religious background strongly influenced people's exposure, vulnerability and ability to respond to and recover from disasters; their capacity to influence their own preparedness for crisis conditions was instrumental to their resilience. For example, a lack of awareness around evacuation plans, early warning systems or risk mitigation strategies had a real impact on an individual's vulnerability to hazards. It was therefore necessary to ascertain how populations could be better equipped to respond to disasters.

10. Migrants, particularly those in an irregular situation, were very often among the most vulnerable in times of crisis as they generally lacked hazard awareness, had reduced access to social networks, and frequently faced language, cultural and legal obstacles in accessing emergency and recovery assistance and information. They often settled in hazard-prone and poorly planned areas where they had limited access to basic services. Other high-risk categories included individuals and communities lacking livelihood diversification, particularly those reliant on agriculture, who were exposed to hazards such as drought or flooding as well as natural disasters, in addition to pre-existing conditions of poverty and marginalization. Trapped populations were those communities that were unable to move out of harm's way in the event of slow-onset disasters and that lacked the financial or social resources to invest in alternative livelihoods as climate pressure increased. Small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries also had a high level of exposure to hazards and the impact of climate change and had limited resources to respond to those growing challenges.

11. Such challenges and risks were shaped by mobility options and choices. While unplanned and unmanaged mobility often generated a new set of personal risks and vulnerabilities, planned and well-organized mobility, whether undertaken through a planned government relocation programme or simply in line with traditional migratory patterns, could be essential in helping people protect their lives and assets, access assistance and gradually return to normalcy as conditions allowed. In order to reduce disaster-induced displacement and mitigate its negative impact on individuals and communities, the authorities must provide them with the capacity to make timely and strategic mobility choices before, during and after sudden disasters. There was a lot of potential for collaboration among actors in that field and a need to invest collectively in such efforts.

12. **Mr. Rauch** (Head of Corporate Climate Center, Munich Re), panellist, said that, in the 1970s, his private-sector insurance company, having realized that loss patterns from natural disasters, particularly weather-related disasters, had started to change in terms of

both frequency and intensity of impacts, had begun to hire scientists in order to better understand what was happening and be able to engage with the scientific community. The company now had a team of 30 scientists, working in fields such as meteorology, geology and geophysics, to identify and measure risks and develop risk transfer solutions, with a focus on mitigation and vulnerability reduction. If an imminent tropical cyclone or major flooding was forecast, the earlier action was taken on the ground, the lower the impact would be on both people and property. Such short-term vulnerability reduction clearly paid off in both humanitarian and monetary terms. Joint work was also carried out with scientific organizations in order to reduce the long-term vulnerability of societies and corporations, for instance by implementing building codes, transferring the knowledge acquired by the private sector and visiting disaster areas to assess the measures taken and calculate the impact. Understanding risk was at the heart of the activities of a private-sector insurance company.

13. Forecast-based financing would involve something of a paradigm shift from the current situation, whereby the insurance sector provided assistance after an event — simply paying for losses — to one where it contributed its knowledge prior to a disaster occurring by collaborating with scientific organizations on forecasts and modelling potential outcomes, allowing humanitarian organizations to start providing early relief to areas where disasters were forecast to strike. The downside of such forecast-based systems was that not all forecasts materialized and there was therefore a degree of uncertainty. However, the insurance sector could help in that regard, for instance through mechanisms to provide financial support in the event that the forecast did not prove to be correct and humanitarian aid organizations had spent money unnecessarily. The outcome would be to stabilize the financial resources of humanitarian aid organizations in the long term and bring the insurance sector's know-how to the table.

14. Given the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters in recent decades, it clearly also made sense for the private sector to contribute to a world where vulnerability was reduced in the long term. To date, the most costly disaster for the private sector in monetary terms had been Hurricane Katrina, which had hit the United States in 2005. Analyses of the humanitarian dimension produced a frustrating and saddening picture: the data clearly showed that the most vulnerable people were those with the lowest incomes. Collaboration and cooperation between the public sector, the scientific community and the financial sector could help improve the situation.

15. **Mr. Lelei** (United Nations Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in Somalia), panellist, said that, in July 2015, several forecasting agencies had provided credible reports that there would be massive flooding of the two big rivers of Somalia, on whose banks significant numbers of people resided and derived their livelihoods. At the time, the country had been living with serious insecurity driven by violent extremism, a weak national Government — although very collaborative and willing to listen and work with humanitarian agencies — very poor infrastructure, virtually no roads and weak community-level structures. The flooding would therefore be occurring in an already very complex context and would affect very vulnerable groups that were already dependent on humanitarian assistance. At the time, he had been the head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Somalia and had been responsible for reaching people before the floods came.

16. Two strands of action had been agreed upon, guided by the global norms already discussed by the panel. One had been effective communication with communities, involving the distribution of community radios and cell phones for leaders and coordinated messaging on pre-emptive displacement, what needs could be met quickly, how children would attend school and protection measures for women and girls, inter alia. The second strand involved distributing sandbags to protect areas of the river that, based on history, would most likely be breached, as well as household items and simple shelter materials, all of which would be shared on the basis of humanitarian principles. Support in airlifting the sandbags and other materials had been received from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations mission in Somalia.

17. The preparedness efforts had created trust and confidence and changed the way that the international humanitarian agencies and civil society organizations and NGOs communicated with, and brought together, local communities. That experience continued to

be drawn on today when difficulties were faced in responding to the country's near-famine conditions. The lessons learned had been incorporated into protocols at the community, regional and national levels and work was under way with the new Ministry of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response to codify them into a national instrument. There was now a clearer understanding of what was needed and how all parties could work together, and even those groups who were the source of insecurity through violent extremism understood that ideological differences must be set aside in order to respond to acts of God. There were positive lessons to be learned from the Somali experience, particularly on implementing the provisions of the Blueprint for Action and other protocols.

18. **The representative of Australia** said that he agreed on the need to focus on preparedness and acknowledged the leadership of Fiji in the response both to the recent Tropical Cyclone Winston and to climate change generally. He fully supported the comments made on the importance of gender sensitivity in all the work and decision-making on disaster preparedness and climate change, as well as the need for relocation to be seen as a last resort and to take account of the concerns of relocated communities on such issues as ancestral links. He would be interested to hear the panel's views on whether there was a need to identify people displaced through disaster or climate impact, as that would be an ongoing issue, as part of the compacts that were currently being developed.

19. **The representative of Germany** said that the impacts of natural disasters in terms of displacement were already being seen. Germany had been advocating forecast-based financing for almost five years to support the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the World Food Programme and others in translating forecasts into early action, but no systematic operational approach had yet been developed. He would be interested to hear what needed to change for progress to be made in that regard. Noting that Germany was co-chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, the overall objective of which was to implement the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, he asked what the international community could do to approach the issue systematically and implement effective practices to reduce disaster displacement risk, carry out humanitarian protection activities and enhance data assessment.

20. **The representative of Japan** said that, as a country particularly prone to natural disasters, Japan had a lot of experience in disaster risk reduction which it was more than willing to share with the world. It firmly believed in the importance of taking a whole-of-society approach to addressing disaster risk reduction, including by sharing traditional knowledge. All citizens, including small children, older persons, women and persons with disabilities, must be trained on how to avoid risk and how to evacuate and find a safe place in the event of a disaster. The country's communities, towns and cities were designating younger citizens to help people with vulnerabilities in disaster situations. Japan had proposed a General Assembly resolution to designate 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day and was pleased that many events had already been organized around the world to raise awareness of disaster risk reduction.

21. **Mr. O' Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that questions posted to the online interactive platform for the panel discussion included a request for ideas and good practice on ways of linking up disaster risk reduction, climate change, human rights, humanitarian and development actors domestically and internationally, how the Platform on Disaster Displacement could help countries like Fiji to prepare for the future and on the kind of concrete commitments that could be made on that issue in the forthcoming global compact for migration.

22. **Ms. Thompson** (Deputy Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants recognized climate change, environmental degradation and disasters as drivers of migration, which, in turn, had multiple impacts on the environment. It was hoped that the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, to be adopted in 2018, would include not only a reference to climate change and environmental degradation, but also practical responses. IOM had established a division that focused on climate change and environmental degradation; it also supported the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative, under which guidelines had been developed for the protection of migrants in countries experiencing crises. In Kathmandu, IOM had set up a programme to help build the capacity of the Government of Nepal to manage the flows

of displaced persons in the event of a major earthquake, with 18 sites in the Kathmandu valley, such as schools, gymnasiums and stadiums, identified as shelters. In 2015, when a major earthquake had struck, people had moved spontaneously to 14 of those sites. It was nonetheless necessary for the international community to continue making efforts to ensure that particular practices formed a coherent whole.

23. Her organization encouraged cooperation among the research community, practitioners and decision makers with a view to making optimal use of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. The Displacement Tracking Matrix, a tool developed by IOM, made it possible to monitor the movements of displaced persons and record a good deal of relevant information that was used by Governments and humanitarian agencies to plan their responses. A lesson that had been learned from the earthquake and tsunami that had struck Japan in 2011 was that greater efforts should be made to ensure that disaster risk information was provided in languages accessible to migrants living in countries whose languages they did not understand.

24. **Ms. Khan** (Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office at Geneva) said that States had to acknowledge their responsibility to establish national policies on displacement, in particular in the case of internal displacement. Governments should see it as a cross-cutting issue and cultivate close ties with civil society. They must also plan for the predictable waves of population displacement that would occur as a result of slow-onset disasters caused by the adverse effects of climate change, an area to which the international community had given too little attention. The population movements should be orderly, and displacement plans designed in an inclusive fashion, using a human rights-based approach. Human Rights Council resolution 35/20, on human rights and climate change, was a major step forward in that regard.

25. Fiji was a strong backer of the Platform on Disaster Displacement and sat on its steering committee. There were still gaps in research and data collection that needed to be addressed and regional charters or agreements on displacement should be developed. Fiji, for instance, would ultimately need help in planning a response to a predictable influx of people from the low-lying Marshall Islands. Consultations on the agreements would also provide opportunities for the Platform to work with other organizations, such as IOM.

26. **The observer from Ecuador** said that the impact of climate change and environmental degradation was greater on vulnerable population groups, such as children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees. Although there was a legal framework for addressing that impact — the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts — the political will to ensure that it was effective was lacking. In addition, more attention was still paid to broader research into climate change than to ways of adapting to its expected impact. Efforts to mobilize resources, in particular for developing countries, could be stepped up, not least by transferring clean technologies and promoting capacity-building.

27. Ecuador had already suffered greatly as a result of climate-related phenomena such as El Niño, and had made an energy transition, putting priority on the development of a number of hydroelectric projects, in order not only to develop renewable sources of energy but also to manage water resources and control flooding. He would like to know what could be done to ensure that sceptical voices did not prevent States and the international community from fulfilling the commitments they had made in respect of climate change and that the activities of the private sector were entirely consistent with those obligations.

28. **The representative of Switzerland** said that it was essential to improve planning and preparation for the likely impact of climate change on population movements. The Nansen Initiative had made it possible for States to identify measures to reduce the risk of population displacement in the wake of natural catastrophes and help build the resilience of populations affected by them. The Platform on Disaster Displacement was making every effort to push for the practical adoption of such measures, under the Initiative's Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change. The Regional Conference on Migration, an intergovernmental forum of countries in North and Central America, had recently produced a collection of good practices relating

to the humanitarian protection afforded to migrants. It had also encouraged other regional forums to identify good practices appropriate to their particular regions.

29. Although preparing for international population movements was essential, States should also strengthen their domestic laws and policies regarding the provision of assistance to persons displaced internally. As it was unlikely that the risk of population displacement could ever be eliminated, they should adopt humanitarian measures that would make it possible to deal consistently and fairly with persons who, displaced by natural disasters, sought protection abroad. Switzerland, for example, granted temporary residence permits to persons not covered by the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees when their return to their country of origin was deemed unsafe, including as a result of natural catastrophes. States should make every effort to respect the commitments they had made in the context of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. **Mr. Rauch** (Head of Corporate Climate Center, Munich Re) said that, to build trust, the scientific community, the financial sector and international humanitarian community needed to develop a common language. A number of major industries, some of them large carbon emitters, had issued calls to support the Paris Agreement. In addition, the nationally determined contributions to mitigating global warming could not be achieved without the involvement of the private sector. A number of major banks, insurers and other companies in the financial sector had begun to divest from the industries that were the heaviest emitters of carbon. The financial sector, and particularly the insurance industry, should nonetheless make greater efforts to draw on its considerable knowledge of vulnerability to natural disasters to develop better adaptation measures. In low-income countries, natural disasters often led to economic crises, which were a major hurdle to achieving sustainable economic development. The private sector, especially the insurance industry, had an evident role to play in such development, but preventing losses and mitigating their impact when they were sustained would require a change of outlook throughout the economy.

31. **Mr. Sy** (Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that Germany was to be commended for its leadership in forecast-based financing, a practice that required changes in behaviour and attitudes, flexibility and a willingness to take risks. However, it was still far from being standard practice, partly because States and the international community were so used to responding to disasters after the fact rather than making preventive efforts to mitigate expected impacts. Forecasts that turned out to be inaccurate should not be seen as wasted efforts, not least because forecasting contributed to the development of a culture of prevention and preparedness and helped to build the resilience that would enable vulnerable communities to withstand shocks. For instance, the yearly arrival of the monsoon was no secret. It could not be prevented but measures could be taken to ensure that the number of people who needed assistance in its wake did not grow by the year. Another advantage of forecasting was that it fostered cooperation among a number of sectors, including meteorological agencies, civil defence organizations, national and local governments and private business, enabling effective operational partnerships. IFRC was therefore very much in favour of making prevention efforts and forecast-based financing the norm.

32. **Ms. Thompson** (Deputy Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that, although the development of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration was being led by States, international organizations, civil society and local authorities were being consulted and efforts were being made to consult migrants themselves. All the organizations concerned should ensure that the final version of the compact included an acknowledgement that climate change and environmental degradation were drivers of migration.

33. **The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** said that it was increasingly accepted that, while the causes of displacement were varied and complex, climate change played a role in the disasters that led to displacement. Its potential to exacerbate mass population movements was viewed as posing particular challenges that should be addressed jointly by States, international organizations and other stakeholders. In Somalia, for instance, drought and famine had added another tragic dimension to the conflict that had displaced hundreds of thousands of

Somalis in recent years. Tropical Cyclone Mora had recently had a direct impact on vulnerable refugee populations in Bangladesh. Those examples highlighted the interconnectedness of climate change, disasters and displacement in all of its complexity.

34. In its Strategic Directions 2017-2021, UNHCR highlighted its interest in contributing to inter-agency protection responses for disaster crises and advancing legal, policy and practical frameworks that could ensure the protection of persons displaced by disaster related to climate change. As most such displacement was internal and the persons affected had rights under a number of international or regional instruments, it was incumbent on the States concerned to ensure that those rights were respected and on the international community to provide the States with the necessary support. Persons displaced across international borders as a result of conflict exacerbated by climate change were entitled to protection under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Persons obliged to seek protection abroad as a result of events seriously disturbing public order could also qualify as refugees under the definitions contained in such regional instruments as the African Refugee Convention and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. At times, displaced persons who might not qualify as refugees under international law would nevertheless need international protection. In those circumstances, access to international protection could be provided by using complementary mechanisms or making temporary arrangements.

35. UNHCR supported the implementation of the Nansen Initiative's Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change and the Platform on Disaster Displacement and had helped develop guidelines on planned relocation, which indicated specific steps that could be taken to ensure that the persons affected were fully involved in efforts to plan for and implement relocation measures. Lastly, she agreed that efforts should be made to ensure that the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration recognized climate change and environmental degradation as causes of displacement.

36. **The representative of the World Food Programme** said that 80 per cent of people who were suffering from hunger lived in parts of the world that were prone to disasters or that faced high levels of environmental degradation. The phrase "natural disaster" was erroneous: disasters could be avoided by taking measures to prepare for natural hazards and risks and to mitigate their effects. Recurrent disasters trapped people in hunger and poverty and eventually led to their displacement. When people were forced to move, the most vulnerable, such as older persons or persons with disabilities, were often left behind. The slow onset of such circumstances meant that funding was rarely provided at the prevention stage but rather in response to a disaster, which was much costlier. Risk needed to be managed in an integrated manner, including through systems to monitor food security and nutritional status. Early warning mechanisms were meaningless if early action was not taken to pre-position supplies, establish safety nets and build local government capacity. Pre-existing social protection systems could be extended when shocks occurred. Using forecast-based financing, funds could be disbursed in advance of a disaster so that people were not forced to move. Development should be viewed as a means of prevention and preparedness and seen as complementary to humanitarian assistance.

37. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that it was important to avoid hazards turning into disasters, particularly in the four current situations that had the potential to become famines. Lessons should be learned from Somalia, where, in 2010 and 2011, half of the 260,000 hunger-related deaths had occurred before the crisis had been declared a famine. The challenge lay in proving that investment in early action did lead to the avoidance of a disaster. In addition to forecast data, "postcast" data was needed in order to quantify the suffering that had been averted.

38. **The representative of Oxfam** said that evidence from climate-related hazards and disasters consistently showed that women and girls were the most affected. Displaced women were at a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Disaster- and climate change-induced mobility, with a focus on gendered impacts, must be recognized in processes such as the global compact on refugees and the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The compacts should reinforce action to minimize and avoid

displacement by addressing the root causes of climate change disasters and vulnerability and ensure that the national, regional and international responses were grounded in the perspectives and priorities of the affected communities. The pilot initiatives of the comprehensive refugee response framework should apply gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction practices in consultation with refugees, host communities and local authorities. Lastly, women and girls should be placed at the forefront of all national displacement policies.

39. **Mr. Sy** (Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that communities affected by disasters did not often distinguish between development and humanitarian assistance. The collaboration between the two spheres needed to be stepped up as quickly as possible in order to address the vulnerabilities underlying the impacts of disasters. The concept of "local actors" should encompass not only organizations or associations; often the first actors on the ground were local individuals who provided assistance to those in need. It was those local people who would notice the first signs of an oncoming disaster and who could become part of community surveillance mechanisms.

40. The gaps between central and local governments and authorities needed to be bridged before, rather than in the midst of, a disaster. It was important to partner with local governments and build trust with them and with the communities in which they worked. Investment was required at the regional and global levels in order to enhance local action. Many shocks and hazards began at the local level and could be contained there through improved coordination with local actors.

41. **Ms. Thompson** (Deputy Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that, in the aftermath of natural disasters, women and children were at a heightened risk of trafficking, abuse and exploitation. IOM had identified gaps between the emergency response and the migration management response and had created the Migration Crisis Operational Framework to bring the two areas closer together. The Governments of the United States of America and the Philippines had led an initiative to produce guidelines on how Governments should respond to crisis situations. The response to disasters or displacement needed to encompass a range of policies and legal tools, including human rights standards, with the aim of facilitating positive and orderly migration and ensuring that a natural hazard did not become a humanitarian crisis. The key objective was to address disaster- and climate change-induced mobility as part of migration policies and the humanitarian response effort.

42. **Mr. Rauch** (Head of Corporate Climate Center, Munich Re) said that the first step in leveraging insurance mechanisms in forecast-based financing was for economic aid organizations to allocate resources to regions where extreme natural disasters were anticipated. Humanitarian organizations could use those resources to save lives in advance of a disaster. If the anticipated disaster did not materialize, the insurance mechanism paid the money back to the humanitarian organizations so that it could then be used to prepare for another anticipated disaster. It was important to measure the risks and successes of such schemes in order to show donors that their initial investment had been spent wisely and had helped people.

43. **Mr. Lelei** (United Nations Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in Somalia) said that the number of people displaced by conflict was more likely to be recorded than the number of people displaced by natural hazards. Preparing for and mitigating the effects of natural hazards in areas affected by conflict presented an opportunity to engage with parties to conflict and to respond to conflict-related displacement.

44. **Ms. Khan** (Permanent Representative of Fiji to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva) said that obtaining access to justice was often a challenge for people who had migrated as a result of disasters or climate change. Many countries had not enshrined economic, social and cultural rights in their Constitutions and, in those that had, such rights were not necessarily enforceable against the State as well as the private sector.

45. **The President** extended his thanks to the panellists for their insightful and thought-provoking input.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.